

# SAMUEL CLEMES

1845-1922

A Short Story of his Life and his  
Connection with Friends' School  
and Leslie House School, Tasmania



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BY  
I. M. SHOBRIDGE  
HOBART





Samuel and Margaret Clemes



## Preface

THIS short story is written for the benefit of all his grandchildren. Some of you never saw him, and all of you, my dear children, would miss much in your lives if you were deprived of that which would stimulate your thoughts to be worthy of your inheritance as members of the Clemes Clan. I hope in the following pages to present three or four portraits to you.

L. MARY SHOOBIDGE.

Hobart, Tasmania,  
*October, 1933.*



## CHAPTER I.

### Early History

The name Clemes is said to be of Greek origin. I believe there is a tradition of certain Greek fugitives who fled before the Turks, and settled in Cornwall, England, in 1747. The family also wonder if there is any connection between us and the Greek pirates who also settled on the Cornish coast. The name means a "vine dresser."

There seems to be something akin to the Greek mind in the attitude of our forbears who were always perpetual seekers after Truth. The following genealogical table was copied from an old Family Bible :—

Phillips m. (1)—Spargo (2) Wm. Clemes  
William Clemes

William 1795, James, Thomas, Joseph, Eliza, Charles, Edwin, Henry  
William Clemes, 1795-1883  
married Susan Daw

Samuel, George, William, Thomas, Alfred, Frank.

We trace our family connections to one ancestor, Wm. Clemes, of St. Austell, Cornwall, who was born in 1795. He was my great grandfather, and I can well remember seeing him a little while before his death in 1883. He was then in his second childhood, and made a very pleasing picture to the three children (two girls and one boy) who had just landed from Madagascar, and were forced by the severity of the English winter to take shelter in Cornwall. I remember him as a fine, upright old man, with flowing white hair and beard (which we loved to plait), scrupulously clean in every detail, and fond of standing at the window to watch our attempts at wheeling our hoops up and down the long drive. Each morning, too, he expected us in his room, and, seated in his grandfather's chair, would solemnly present us with the same gifts, which, by the way, were smuggled back into his drawer, every night.



He lived with Uncle William and his family in the old home—a commodious and comfortable house, standing in large well-kept grounds not far from the main streets of St. Austell. In his day he had been a hatter, and the shop, which had been enlarged to include other departments, was then conducted by Uncle William. I can remember the loving atmosphere of the home with Uncle, Aunt, and our Cousins Susie and Jessie. The “love birds” in the aviary also made a deep impression on my childish mind. Some old friends of my father, viz., Robert Kirton and his family, and the Veales, were introduced to us here. I refer a lot to this old family home; it was here that my father spent his early childhood. Having been deprived of both parents at the age of five years, he was left to the guardianship of these loving relatives at St. Austell. From here he was transferred to Sidcot School, the nearest boarding school conducted by Friends. Our family were members of that religious body.

Sidcot School in those days was very different to the establishment of to-day. Holidays were unknown, except once or twice a year, and tradition says Samuel Clemes was one of the leaders in the famous “barring out” inaugurated by the boys to obtain a more frequent return home. Father used often to refer to the strict discipline of that time. A pupil was given no choice other than his decision at the beginning of the year whether he favoured jam or butter on his bread. Another custom was to serve pudding first, as no plate was provided for the meat course if you refused the first. This spartan treatment was no doubt hard, but it inculcated habits of self-control.

Amongst the stories of this early time might be recorded his nightly attempts at self-education, when, by the aid of a candle, he mastered many branches of higher mathematics, and interested himself in science. He was later apprenticed to a London draper, and found out that during the American War the prices of cotton were frequently altered to suit the trader. His developing mind also revolted against the practice of encouraging young persons to form the drink habit.

Samuel Clemes m. Jane Willis

Samuel

Isabella Jane

Very interesting family connections arose from this marriage of our grandfather. Jane Willis' mother was Betsy Armstrong, a Jewess. Some of the Willis family were employed by Geo. I., Geo. II., Geo. IV., William IV., and Queen Victoria, in extensive alterations to Windsor Castle, as they were noted for their sculpture. One was also curator of the Bodleian Library, Oxford. Sir John Hare, the famous actor, also traces his descent to the same family.

## CHAPTER II.

### Early Manhood

After school days were over, Samuel Clemes, having chosen teaching as his vocation, was sent for training to the Flounder's Institute (Pontefract, Yorkshire), in preparation for a position in a Friends' School. Here he was fortunate in having as fellow-students Frederick Andrews (for many years Principal of Ackworth School), Edward Worsdell (known for advanced thought and a literary critic), Arthur Eddington, etc. It was when at the Flounders that my father had the joy of meeting my mother. Susie Hall was then a young teacher at Ackworth, and the proximity of the two institutions made it no difficult matter to meet. In my mother's early letters, frequent mention is made of this happy time. Their engagement, however, was not viewed with approval by the members of her family, as Samuel Clemes was unknown to them, and he was also contemplating taking her to Madagascar, where he proposed to go as a missionary. Father served his apprenticeship at Rawdon School, and mother continued to fulfil her obligations at Ackworth until their marriage took place in January, 1873.

The work at Rawdon, fraught with many difficulties, ended successfully. He left with the affectionate greetings of Charles Barnard and his fellow teachers. A clock on our mantelpiece still reminds us of that time. It bears the following inscription:—“Presented to Samuel Clemes, on his leaving Low Green School, to go as a missionary to Madagascar, 1872.”

## CHAPTER III.

### A Missionary's Life

After their marriage they set sail for Madagascar in a sailing ship. My mother describes the voyage in a letter written to her people. It was a long one, taking months where it now takes weeks, but the presence of other missionaries, who eventually became loved friends, made the time pass pleasantly. The port of call, Tamalare, was only an open roadstead. A tedious journey in palanquins had to be faced to reach the capital, Antananarivo (now Tananarivo). Rivers abounding in crocodiles had to be crossed in boats hewn out of trunks of trees. Great forests and jungles had to be negotiated. The capital is situated on a prominent hill in the interior of the island—the queen's palace stands out prominently amongst the



unpretentious houses of the natives. Very narrow and crooked roadways serve as lines of communications, and a large open square in the heart of the city is the meeting place for all public demonstrations. A familiar landmark is the lake with the sacred island devoted to the annual festival of the Queen's Bath. As the years went on, quite a number of prominent buildings were erected, including churches, schools, and hospitals. When my parents arrived, Christianity was in its infancy, and the cruel persecutions of the new converts from heathenism not a thing of the past. Let me recall a few memories of those early days. I can well remember the marriage of a royal pair, and the magnificent celebration attending it. All the missionaries were expected to attend, and also help in the wedding feast preparation. My mother's letter is very descriptive. Imagine a large square park completely carpeted. The tent and huge red umbrella in the centre for Queen Ranavalona, tables laden with viands surrounding the whole, and at frequent intervals, whole carcases of bullocks standing up for the entertainment of the children.

The daily routine at a Mission House included medical attention to all gathered in the compound. Many and varied were the diseases recorded, from the diagnosis of leprosy and smallpox to the infantile troubles of a teething baby. Horrors of slavery, daily fear of robbers and mad dogs, were some of the troubles to be faced. Servants were plentiful, as work in the tropics is difficult to perform. After ten years of busy, faithful service, in starting schools, conducting services, and improving the native conditions generally, my father found it necessary to return to England with his family. The journey from the capital to the coast was fraught with much inconvenience. Water was not always procurable, and through the desert the three children cried themselves to sleep for three nights. The little native houses, in which we were forced to shelter, abounded with vermin, and the rivers abounded with terrifying crocodiles. Bourbon was a source of interest, as there we were introduced to horses and carriages, and lovely French shops. We travelled to Aden in a Japanese steamer, and then transhipped into a majestic liner of the French Messageries-Maritimes Line. It was on this journey we became acquainted with a little French girl, and it was noticeable that differences of language proved no barriers to friendship. An outbreak of cholera at Marseilles compelled a journey to Calais through France. How cold it was in the depth of winter, and how cramped the quarters in a railway carriage! London greeted us in a fog that made such an impression on our childish minds as to arouse the anxious query, "Is England always like this?"

It was a relief to be hurried down to sunny Cornwall, as described at the commencement of these memoirs. From here we journeyed up to the North of England, to Yorkshire. The journey was broken at Birmingham, and there we met our dear Aunt Maggie, our mother's youngest sister, of whom we had heard so much, and was delighted to remain with us always, as she lovingly took our dear mother's place.

Our relatives, Aunt Mary and Uncle Thomas Little, made us very welcome in Birmingham. From there we journeyed to Thirsk, the home of Aunt Pollie and Uncle John Hall. Very happy remembrances are centred round that family home, though, unfortunately, Sowerby village, near by, is connected with the loss of our dear mother. The tropical climate of Madagascar had proved too trying for our young English mother, and she died at the age of thirty years, and was buried in the peaceful little cemetery behind the Friends' Meeting House at Thirsk.

## CHAPTER IV.

### Brookfield Friends' School

Father had a very happy four years here. His position was that of Headmaster under Martin Lidbetter. We lived in the cottage close to the school. I well remember our happy childhood, and the uproarious games of hide-and-seek. The favourite hiding-place was in the cellar close to the well—an eerie spot, therefore popular. The Lidbetter children numbered three, too, and being of similar age, were our boon companions. We organised and invented wonderful games, taking advantage of our beautiful avenues of trees. Each ran on his or her special railway line, calling out the names of the stations conscientiously. A large beech tree with wide spreading branches was always London. One reward for observance of rules was a free ride down Buxton Hill in the barrow. We also chose scenes from English and Greek History, enacting once again the Trojan Wars and the Wars of the Roses.

Life in a big boarding school is always full of interest, but I think we appreciated holiday times, when the whole premises were at our disposal. Father introduced Practical Chemistry, and didn't we enjoy the experiments. On fine days the whole school would go for organised long walks, sometimes in search of primroses for the London hospitals. They would also take advantage of the frozen meadows in winter, or visit the ancient Roman remains of old Carlisle. The large swimming bath was a great attraction,



and Joseph Spence Hodgson's exhibition of special feats still a living memory. The school manufactured its own gas, and a warm corner was a favourite resort for the birds that stayed with us during the winter. In the spring and summer, Brookfield was a delightful place. The school was hidden by foliage. Flowers sprung up everywhere, the territory across the brook was fascinating, and birds nested in all the hedges and trees. Oh, the happy memories of Wigton! It was here that Aunt Maggie joined us, and became our beloved mother. There was no law in England then making it legal for a man to marry his deceased wife's sister, so a journey to Switzerland became necessary. We children were left with dear Cousin Lizzie Henderson at the "Whan Lands," in Allendale. It was an ideal home, close to a river. Don't I well remember the games down there on the pebbly beach, the daily visits to the hay-field, etc., etc. Another ideal home for us was Whenfell Hall, with Cousin Janet Robinson, *nee* Willis. It was situated in the Lake country, and crammed full of delights with its wood and fell. There was also a cupboard in the family home full of new parlour games of all descriptions, which we had access to. At this time we also had the joy of crossing over to Ireland to make the acquaintance of our relations there—the Haydocks, of Hillsbrough, Ireland, lovely Ireland, with its marvellous green and babbling brooks.

Aunt Pollie, at Thirsk, always made us feel that it was another beloved home, and so it was. Shall we ever forget those rambles on the hills and through the woods and round Lake Gormere?

But the happy days ended all too quickly, for we had to sail for far-off Tasmania, and leave all behind. We also left behind a tiny grave, showing the last resting place of little John Willis Clemes, our baby brother.

## CHAPTER V.

### Friends' School, Hobart

We sailed from England in the "Tainui" (4,000 tons). It was considered a big ship in those days—1887. We said goodbye to England at Plymouth. Fortunately for us children the voyage was made interesting by the presence in our saloon of a large family also proceeding to Tasmania—Mrs. Bowling and her eight children. Our friendship has continued through the years. A severe storm drove our ship far south, so that our arrival in Hobart was considerably delayed. The Friends kindly came out in a large tender

to meet us, and until the school premises were ready the family was distributed amongst the members of the Meeting.

The Hobart Friends' School began its existence in a small house on Landsdowne Crescent, which was named "Flintham Villa," opposite the Boys' Home. The first pupils consisted of members of the family joined by the children of a few friends. Later on the house in Barrack Street was ready, and quite a good beginning was made, and even a boarding school started. It was not long before the second house of the terrace was appropriated, and also a large schoolroom added at the back, with a laboratory underneath.

It was in Warwick Street that Alf. was born. There being no room for gardening, we were allowed to make use of the premises behind the Meeting House in Murray Street, so each week a procession of boarders armed with necessary tools could be seen marching to the scene of operations. The move to the present premises at Hobartville was a happy experience, and full of excitements. All manner of legends connected with the old building and grounds added a charm to our new home. Extensive alterations had to be made to turn it into suitable premises for a school. A large number of pleasant memories gather round the name of Hobartville, for here we had excitements of a fire, a burglar, a milking competition, a fancy dress ball, numerous excursions in all directions, lectures, negro minstrels, literary meetings, etc., etc. A break had to be made in 1900, and a new school founded. My father was then fifty-five years of age.

## REMINISCENCES OF FRIENDS' SCHOOL

In recalling the old days, the names of Margaret Irvine, Benjamin Le Tall, and Charles Sowden come vividly before me. Margaret Irvine joined the Staff as Infant Class Teacher from the opening day, and was connected with the school for over thirty years. We were very fond of her, and she was a true and loyal friend to our family.

Benjamin Le Tall was a great favourite, being an interesting and racy teacher. Having travelled abroad, and possessing many interesting mementoes of his sojourn in Greece, Italy, and France, his history and geography lessons were always popular. He lived at Boothan Cottage, on Mt. Stuart, but his weekly visit to tea at the school was always looked forward to, as the whole dining-room was entertained by stories of Ackworth and York. We rejoiced to hear of his marriage to our Miss Wilson (the school housekeeper), for we knew his declining years would be well tended.



Charles Sowden was a young English teacher of a very winning personality. He possessed the faculty of arousing our interest in all his hobbies. The Literary and Debating Society benefited by his allegiance, as also the boarders' garden plots. Unfortunately, his keen love of yachting proved his undoing, and one Saturday afternoon the school was plunged into sorrow by a tragic drowning case in the Derwent. He has left a poem in "School Echoes" entitled "Hints on Navigation."

## CHAPTER VI.

### Leslie House School

This is our very own school, so, naturally, much love centres round the old name. In an article written a little while ago I find these words:—"For thirty years a quiet work has been proceeding, and to-day an influential school stands as the outcome of an act of faith." It was, indeed, an act of faith. We had hoped to make the new experiment elsewhere, but all doors were closed. The premises chosen were small and inconvenient, but were all that could be procured in New Town at the time. The name Leslie House was adopted for the school, and we started with a commencement roll of twenty pupils. As boarders began to arrive the premises opposite were procured, and two new schoolrooms and a gymnasium built on. Leslie House School continued to flourish in the old quarters until 1907, when a move was made to the present site at Boa Vista, overlooking Hobart and its harbour. Many scholastic honours were won, including two Rhodes Scholarships. Our athletes also proved their worth against competing teams, and Alfred was successful in obtaining championships in running. Also will we ever forget Lal Hay's venturesome ascent up the sloping roof to put out a fire, Leslie McDougall's vivid interpretation of Mark Anthony's speech, Spencer Churchward's preparation for return to Adelaide, the boys' gallant stand at the sports, and Jim Waller and his football pants, etc., etc.

As an educationalist, Samuel Clemes was described as ahead of his day. He possessed a winning personality, and had no difficulty in commanding the interest of his pupils. Character building was his main objective. The aim of the school has been to provide the finest type of educated citizens to contribute to the life of the State, and the larger world outside—not hangers-on, but men and women capable of their fair share of service for the community.

On the death of Samuel Clemes in 1922, the school became known as Clemes College. The quarters at Boa Vista are immensely interesting, belonging, as they do, to the early days of Hobart's history. The original house was built for a Government official. It has been gradually enlarged to suit present conditions. The old stone pedestals, cut at Port Arthur, still adorn the garden; and the reservoir which supplied the house has been converted into a swimming pool. The stone courtyard still reminds one of the bush-ranging days—also the substantial padlocks and iron gratings. The commodious grounds give ample room for playgrounds, and a large garden supplies the school with fruit and vegetables. Some of the events connected with Clemes College are:—Three joyous weddings, and the advent of young members of the family. We can never forget the effects of the outbreak of war. A hundred or more of our young lads felt the urgent call of service. The girls held many a gathering on the premises, preparing for the monthly parcels to the front, for not one of our boys was forgotten, nor the girls either who volunteered as nurses. We had socials to welcome them home, and socials to send them off, and we had to endure many weary months of anxiety.

During all this sad time, father identified himself entirely with his boys, and many a broken-hearted relative was comforted by his messages of faith and hope. We have built a Memorial Hall and, according to the tablet placed therein, the name of Samuel Clemes is associated with those brave boys whose loss we mourn to-day.

Samuel Clemes died on the 22nd of October, 1922, in his seventy-seventh year. The qualities so manifest in life remained with him to the end, and we who watched can never forget the triumphant spirit that bore weakness and pain so bravely. Death held no terrors for one who loved God as he did. A great number of appreciations were published from the pens of old scholars, etc., etc., all testifying to the esteem and love in which he was held. We who are left behind can truly say, "Thy gentleness hath made me great," for those words aptly describe him.

#### SOME OF SAMUEL CLEMES' RELATIVES.

**John Willis, M.A., D.Litt., Ph.D.,** was held in great repute in his native city of Bradford, England. He lived to be one hundred years of age, and kept his keen intellect and absorption in mathematics. My father was much influenced by his teaching and protective care.

**William Willis** was another genius, being the inventor of the platinotype process of photography, and perhaps the greatest English authority on the discoveries of the spectroscope.



Other branches of the Willis connection have made themselves famous in art, sculpture, and teaching.

Alfred Clemes, known as the Grand Old Man of Stawell, Victoria, will always be remembered. He came out to Australia in the early days, attracted by the discoveries of gold in Victoria. He lived to see Stawell grow from a collection of tents to a flourishing town, in whose welfare he was always interested, and in whose expansion he had had a vital share. He lived to celebrate the diamond jubilee of his wedding, and was beloved by all. He had good organising abilities, and for years was secretary to the Wimmera Shire Council. He was also the means of establishing permanent banking conditions in a mining community.

## CHAPTER VII.

### Susan and Margaret Hall Clemes

I have come now to the account of our two beloved mothers. They were the youngest members of a family of ten children. My grandfather, Isaac Hall, was left to be all in all to his motherless children. Hand in hand, the two youngest would follow him round the farm at High Studdon, or up in the moors behind the house. It was a picturesque spot in the Valley of the Allen between Alledale Town and Allenheads, in the County of Northumberland, England, close to the famous Hadrian's Wall and Scottish Borders. Sir Walter Scott mentions the family in his Border Tales, for some of the Halls were known as raiders on the territory north of the Tweed. Another tradition comes to us from the pages of Carlyle, who describes a Hall as the friend of a Norwegian king, and was responsible for his conversion in Iceland about 840 A.D.

My grandfather's family were all sent to Brookfield School, Wigton, Cumberland. Before they left home the two little girls obtained their first instruction at a little Dame school near by. Mother used to tell us how unjustly poor little Susie was treated one morning. In consequence of this treatment, the elder children locked the poor school maan in the coal hole. Susie, who was barely four, had been reported as peeping through her fingers during prayer time. Some of the tales of childhood centre round "Uncle Marmaduke," who had lost a leg in the Napoleonic Wars, and whose wooden substitute was always a source of wonder.

Imagine a big roomy kitchen with a peat fire and the family busy with their weaving and spinning during the long winter evenings, when snow prevented access to the outside world! Grandmother's

spinning-wheel was found in the garret not so many years ago.

After school days were over the little girls found themselves inmates of Ackworth School, where they were apprenticed as pupil teachers. Susie, after her marriage, was for ten years a missionary in Madagascar. Margaret, always intellectually keen, completed her studies at The Mount, attended the Edinburgh University, and then resided abroad to complete her knowledge of French and German. She spent very happy periods as governess at the homes of Henry Pease and John Grubb Richardson. On the death of her sister, in 1884, she was married to Samuel Clemes. Her death occurred in 1923. Here let me copy the In Memoriam notice which appeared on our school magazine:—"She possessed strong moral courage, and, in spite of failing health, still gave valuable assistance to societies for the amelioration of distress and want. Her rare personality found its expression and made itself felt in the ordinary course of an ordinary life. She left a deep and abiding work—a good heroic type of noble womanhood."

### SAMUEL CLEMES' CHILDREN AND GRANDCHILDREN

Samuel Clemes m. Susan Hall, 1873

Isabella Mary m. Marcus Shoobridge	Margaret m. Sydney Dickinson	William m. Gertrude Rogers
Margaret Anne David William	Samuel Benson James	Joan Willis Margaret Ruth John

Samuel Clemes m. Margaret Hall, 1884

John Willis died	Alfred Willis m. Mary Brammall Joan Ryllis John Wm. Willis Mary
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## CHAPTER VIII.

### Isabella Jane Clemes

Born 1840, died 1903

She was my father's only sister, and was one or two years his junior, and, being left as orphans at an early age, were everything to each other. Auntie was brought up by her Willis relations, and practically adopted into the family home of Uncle John Willis. She was sent with father to Sidcot School. Her intellectual tastes



were late in developing, and at her own wish she left school early and went to keep house for Uncle Isaac Brown, in Leeds, to whom she was much attached. On his death she inherited enough to keep herself independently with a very dear friend in Leeds. She began to wonder if she possessed similar mathematical powers as the rest of her family, and from Edward Carpenter, who first stimulated these interests, she conceived the project of going to Newnham College, Cambridge, in 1876.

I am indebted to Miss Alice Gardener, Historical Lecturer, Newnham, for the following notes:—"She was much older than most of the students; very unassuming, and rather delicate in health. She was not one who usually attracted strangers, but those who became her friends grew even more impressed by her singular refinement of character and energy of mind. Perhaps her conspicuous characteristic was a certain moral thoroughness. She delved deeply into philosophy and morals, but there was no trace in her of pedantry or censoriousness, but plenty of human nature with a measure of active kindliness."

The Friends of that day were not liberal-minded enough for Auntie, so she ceased to become a member of the Society, but always retained some marks of the best kind of Quakerism. She obtained her mathematical Tripos in 1881. For a time she undertook work in connection with the Greenwich Observatory, but, unfortunately, her health broke down. I remember receiving a letter from her, expressing her joy at doing national work. On her recovery she joined us in Tasmania, and both Friends' and Leslie House Schools benefitted from her coaching in higher mathematics. It was always considered an honour to be invited to her room, where, surrounded by her beloved books, she occupied her spare time in writing out pages of solutions to the mathematical problems in the text books. These proved useful to professors and teachers alike.

So she lived amongst us as an endearing personality, always available, and never too busy to attend to our wants. I wish you had known her, children, and hope these few inadequate remarks will help to make you love her memory.

The following appeared in the Leslie House School Magazine

#### IN MEMORIAM.

Mr. SAMUEL CLEMES.

October, 1922

"He scarce had need to doff his pride or slough the dross of Earth—

E'en as he trod that day to God so walked he from his birth,  
In simpleness and gentleness and honour and clean mirth."  
—Kipling.

The sunset streaming from the western sky  
O'ergilds the silver of his locks. A deep  
Contented sigh parts the tired lips. As sleep  
Well-earned, the task complete, approaches nigh,  
The pen falls from his weary hand. So best!  
The daylight fades. The writer takes his rest.  
But still his words remain. For on our souls  
He scored them, and they stand out bold and clear.  
No littleness they show, nor guile, nor fear;  
But honor, truth and courage are the goals  
They point us to, and bid us seek the right  
Nor quit the battle till we win the fight.  
And not by precept only, but in all  
His ways he showed us how we ought to live  
To gain our highest growth; that we should give  
Our strength to succor those who faint and fall;  
And, heedless of ourselves, that we should find  
Our greatest joy in service of mankind.  
He was a mirror of the beautiful  
His eyes beheld in all things. Kindly cheer  
He shed around, and held us all most dear  
To his great heart. We were undutiful  
And ingrates did we not his love return  
And selflessness from his example learn.  
Dear master, and, O more than master, friend,  
If they speak sooth who hold that spirits keep  
Knowledge of us, when, as we say, they sleep  
Their last long sleep, then hear me as I send  
This threnody to your bright home above,  
And take it with my reverence and love.

—Eric Jeffrey.

At the graveside Mr. W. H. Dawson paid a noble and eloquent tribute to his departed friend. Few that heard his speech will ever forget it. We regret infinitely that the whole of it was not preserved, but we are glad to be able to reproduce the following disiecta membra which were garnered by one who was present and transmitted to us:—



"He has been my friend for thirty years. But all during that long period I have felt as I feel to-day, standing by his grave—as, I know well, you feel as you stand here with me; that the friendship has not been equal. He gave more than he received.

"For his habitual dwelling-place was on those high tablelands which we account ourselves fortunate but to see through the mists from afar, to struggle weakly but persistently towards which is our whole life's high endeavour. But those heights were his home; so naturally, so absolutely, that in his beautiful simplicity of soul he knew not that it was not with us even as it was with him.

"Many and precious are the memories that cluster round that thirty years' friendship. But the most vivid of all is one that has come to me as I stand here—come for the thousandth time.

"He and I were walking on the sea beach near his country home. Our conversation was on matters high and deep. And in the course of it I asked him a question. How could he distinguish between the sense of heart-comfort and soul-strength which came to him simply because he believed that there was a Love and a Power outside himself, and the sense of the same which (as he was convinced) came to him as the result of the direct conscious impact of that 'somewhat not himself' upon his separate human personality? The memory is a quarter of a century old, yet still I hear the ringing tones of his voice, still I see the unwonted fire in his mild eyes, as he turned round on me and said, 'I know.'

"It was the keynote of his life. To you, the boys and girls whom he so truly loved, I have a special message. In years to come, a veil may fall upon the face of your faith. In the dust and turmoil of daily commonplace life, it may come to seem to you that it is the things of this side which are the realities, the things of that side which are the dreams. If that hour comes to you, from his graveside I charge you to remember that once you knew one Samuel Clemes, a man who knew that it is the things of this side which are the passing dreams, the things of that side which are the abiding, the eternal realities."

#### AN APPRECIATION BY AN OLD BOY.

It is with a very humble mind that one approaches the question of endeavouring to form an estimate of the influence which Mr. Clemes exercised in the educational world in Tasmania. His greatest monument is the affection which all those who were associated with him and his teachers and scholars in particular will always feel for the great, good, and kindly friend and instructor.

He is mourned—mourned is the word—in homes all over Tasmania and Australia, and indeed far beyond, wherever his old boys and girls have wandered. But Mr. Clemes left a more material memorial of the industry and forming influences which were his characteristics. After an honourable and successful association with the Friends' School, of which he was the founder and the first Principal, Mr. Clemes performed another service in the cause of education in Tasmania, the establishment of Leslie House School, of which his elder son, Mr. W. H. Clemes, is now headmaster, and as that school is essentially his work, it is fitting that when the founder has passed away some little account of his work should be given.

There were but twenty-one pupils gathered round Mr. Clemes when he started, in 1900, his new little school at Leslie House, Pirie Street, New Town, but of that number several, including Professor James Waller, of Dublin University, a recognised world authority on reinforced concrete, are well-known men and women now. That number has now swelled to well over two hundred. Mr. Clemes had associated with him as his teaching staff, his sister, Miss Clemes, his two daughters, and Mr. McDougall, now the Rev. Mr. McDougall. Mr. Clemes' educational doctrines were at that time regarded as revolutionary, but the growth of some of the systems which he introduced—the kindergarten for one—shows how sound and far-sighted they were. He was responsible for the placing of sloyd (wood-working) upon the curriculum; he did not believe in prizes or the awarding of marks. "Work for work's sake," he used to say, and he taught that the examination standard was not the only thing to be aimed at, a principle which has always been adhered to at Leslie House.

Although it is many years since Mr. Clemes ceased active and regular work on the teaching staff, he had remained in close touch with his school, and was engaged upon work for it the day before his death. During the last two years he had introduced the Montessori method throughout the lower school, and also stopped the setting of home work in the ordinary sense in the lower classes, such "homework" as was done being confined to work leading to the development of interest and dexterity in useful hobbies.

Since 1907 Leslie House School has been carried on at Boa Vista, the fine site of the old King's Grammar School, which was then incorporated with the Hutchins School. Its old scholars have distinguished records in professional, civic, and commercial life, and the school, in every respect, is one of which its founder might well be proud.

Mr. Clemes actively encouraged the study of all branches of



science in his schools, and he supervised practical laboratory work. He was fully alive to the advantages of technical education. It would seem from the valedictory report which he read on the occasion of his resignation of the headmastership of the Friends' School in 1900, that he already had a vision of Tasmania as an industrial State, and he was one of the first to realise the necessity of technical education, a subject which other people are only now beginning to be actively concerned about.

### TRIBUTE FROM THE BLIND SOCIETY.

The name of Samuel Clemes will ever be associated with the Tasmanian Society for the Blind, Deaf and Dumb, and in the death of its President this Society has sustained a serious loss, writes the headmaster (Mr. R. Harley). Along with the present chairman of the Board of Management, Mr. George Smith (the sole surviving foundation member of the Society), and others who have "crossed the great divide," the deceased gentleman identified himself with this philanthropic work in 1896, and rendered invaluable service in connection with the establishment of the institution at North Hobart. Mr. Clemes filled the offices of hon. secretary from 1897 to 1910, and chairman from 1910 to 1915, and on the death of Hon. William Moore in 1915, was elected President, a position he occupied until the day of his death. His long experience as a member of the executive board and his excellent judgment gave to his opinions an importance that was always recognised, and his counsel prevailed in many of the most critical periods in the history of the Society. His kindly nature endeared him to all those privileged to be associated in Christian and philanthropic work in which he was so deeply interested. The record of Mr. Clemes' personal devotion to the interests of the blind and deaf and dumb constitutes a work of sympathetic effort which may serve as an inspiration to others who realise in any way what it means to be blind or deaf or dumb. In his death the pupils, teachers, and officers of the institution have lost a sincere and highly respected friend, while he has left to the world the shining example of an upright citizen, to his profession the superb pattern of a brilliant teacher, and to his family the priceless legacy of a spotless name.

The flag at the institute was flown at half-mast yesterday out of respect to the late President.

The Superintendent and Secretary of the Tasmanian Society for the Blind, Deaf and Dumb (Mr. S. T. Ellis) wrote:—"The death

of Mr. S. Clemes, the President of the Tasmanian Society for the Blind, Deaf and Dumb, has caused a breach in the ranks of the members of the committee that will be hard to fill. By his unassuming and lovable disposition he had endeared himself to every person connected with the institution. During the whole time of his connection with the institution he devoted his time and energies most unselfishly to the interests of that Society which he loves so well. His name was held in reverence and respect by all the committee, staff, workers, and pupils, and his death comes as a great shock and will be an almost irreparable loss to the institution."

A Leslie House scholar wrote:—"The death of Mr. Samuel Clemes, although not altogether unexpected, came as a sad blow to the many old pupils of Leslie House School. There have, surely, been few headmasters who have been so thoroughly in sympathy with the minds of their pupils as was 'Old Sammy,' as we affectionately termed him among ourselves. He knew every individual scholar well, and in his dealings with each always made a sincere effort to appreciate the pupil's point of view. The traditional relation of master and pupil did not exist between him and us, for we always felt that in him we had a sincere and approachable friend, who was willing to make our own difficulties his, and to help us to overcome them. His influence for good was enormous, and was all the greater in that it was unconsciously exercised, for he was not given to prosy moral lecturing. Instead, his whole life shone out as a beacon shedding its beneficence on all who came within the compass of its rays. The result has been shown in the moral tone of his school, which has ever been of the highest, and in the fact that nearly all of his old scholars have become useful and respected members of the community. His outlook on life was one of cheerful optimism. He was always tolerant of other people's point of view, so long as that did not permit any tinge of meanness, double-dealing, or cruelty. But in combating these characteristics he was relentless, and his voice was immediately raised in eloquent and telling indignation. He had a keen sense of humour, but it was always kindly. He took a deep interest in the careers of all his old scholars, and none whose lifework lay in the other States ever returned to Hobart without looking him up; any triumphs they gained gave as much pleasure to him as to them. His religious views are well known, and no man ever lived up to them more steadfastly than he. With him, religion was not a creed to be believed, but a life to be lived. His constant advice to his pupils was that they should aim at growing up good, rather than great or clever."



## IN MEMORIAM.

MARGARET HALL CLEMES.

April, 1923

In this issue of our School Paper we are endeavouring to commemorate the lives of the two greatest benefactors of Leslie House School. To my lot has fallen the share of penning a few lines in appreciation of one whom all old scholars love to remember as "Mother." The news of her passing on the 4th of April, 1923 was somewhat expected by those who knew how frail she had become. The loss cannot yet be fully realised by any of us; but we rejoice to know that death meant for her a glorious reunion and release from all bodily weakness.

A short resume of her life's history may be of interest to the readers of this magazine, and so I offer these rough and inadequate notes.

In Northumberland, close to the Scottish border, within sight of the historic Roman Wall, lies the beautiful valley of the River Allen from which the straggling old-fashioned township of Allendale derives its name. Take the road leading to Allendale, and, after passing through typical fir woods with the squirrels darting across your path, you come at length to the gate leading up to High Stud-don, my grandfather's old home. Eighteen years ago I re-visited it, but the land and homestead associated with many tales dear to me from childhood had reverted to strangers.

There, close to the heather-clad moors, and surrounded by stretches of meadow and wood facing the mountain stream, my mother spent her earliest years. Many an adventure could those old stone walls relate of exciting escapes from cattle when the little girls strayed incautiously in search of favourite flowers. The memory of my grandfather was always a joy to my mother, and the recollection of what he meant to his motherless children remained with her to the very last.

Let us take a peep at the old homestead with its compact stone front, its comfortable farm buildings and the roomy old-fashioned kitchen with its large fireplace. In my mother's day peat fires were in vogue. Up in the garret was found quite recently parts of the spinning wheel that hummed so frequently during the long winter

months when snow prevented frequent intercourse with the outer world. From this peaceful country home she was sent to a Friends' Boarding School in Cumberland. The same superintendent guided our early studies when very many years later our parents returned to Wigton as teachers. I can well imagine the life there with its healthy surroundings and in accord with Quaker simplicity and thoroughness. My mother's education as a girl was fittingly concluded at The Mount School, York, then, as now, the finishing school for girls of our society. Her desire for further culture resulted in her entering Edinburgh University. From thence she entered the homes of noted Friends as governess, and also taught at one of the largest Friends' Boarding Schools—Ackworth. After that came the sojourn in France and Germany to acquire more intimate knowledge of both languages. In her own interesting way she could recount the life lived in these foreign homes, and her experiences of travel.

In 1886 my parents left the Old Country and the home ties to found the Friends' High School here in Hobart. After being associated with it for thirteen years, and seeing its rapid growth from small beginnings in Warwick Street till the present premises had to be obtained, circumstances over which they had no control necessitated the commencement of a fresh venture, and Leslie House School sprang into being in 1900.

What that institution is to-day we owe entirely to their unsparing exertions given for the intellectual and moral uplift of every scholar that entered its doors.

In conclusion, let me say that of all my mother's characteristics that influenced me most, perhaps the outstanding one was strong moral courage, and also that in spite of failing health she could still afford practical help to various societies for the amelioration of distress and want.

Her rare personality found its expression and made itself felt in the ordinary course of an ordinary life. The light that was in her was made visible, and on the lives of those who knew her she left a deep and abiding mark—"a noble type of good, heroic womanhood."

I. MARY SHOOBRIDGE.



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# Samuel Clemes 1845-1922

a short story of his life and his connection with  
Friends School and Leslie House School, Tasmania  
by I.M. Shoobridge

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# Clemes, Samuel (1845–1922)

by [William N. Oats](#)

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Samuel Clemes (1845–1922), educationist, was born on 25 December 1845 at Liskeard, Cornwall, England, son of Samuel Clemes, hatter, and his wife Jane, née Willis. Both parents became teachers at [Ackworth](#) Friends' School, Yorkshire. Samuel was orphaned at the age of 5 and brought up by his uncle at St Austell, Cornwall. He attended the Friends' [Sidcot](#) School, Somerset, in 1857–59, and worked in the drapery business, but his interest in teaching and mission work led to his acceptance by the Friends' Foreign Mission Association for training at the Flounders' Institute, Yorkshire, in 1870–71. After a year's teaching apprenticeship at Rawdon School he married an [Ackworth](#) teacher, Susannah Hall, and they went as missionaries to Tananarive, Madagascar. Susannah's ill health caused their return to Yorkshire in 1882, and she died at [Sowerby](#). Clemes then became head teacher at [Wigton](#) Friends' School, Cumberland, and on 12 July 1884 in Neuchâtel, Switzerland, he married Susannah's sister Margaret.

In 1886 Clemes was appointed as headmaster of a proposed Friends' school in Hobart, Tasmania, and, with his family, sailed in the *Tainui* on 12 August. Friends' High School opened at Warwick Street, Hobart, on 31 January 1887 with thirty-three students; it moved to larger premises at [Hobartville](#), North Hobart, in 1889. The school was unique as a co-educational day and boarding establishment with pupils from all Australian colonies and New Zealand. His leadership and geniality did much to create its sense of community while Margaret [Clemes's](#) help gave a family atmosphere to the boarding house.

Clemes emphasized the teaching of science, an attitude stemming from his pioneering interest in chemistry as a subject at [Wigton](#). He also stressed physical and technical education, believing the latter should be part of every student's [programme](#), not for vocational reasons, but because manual skills had a moral value; his introduction of the [Sloyd](#) System was in advance of contemporary practice. A distinctive feature of the extra-curricular [programme](#) was 'Education for Leisure', and through the school's Natural History and Essay Society Clemes encouraged exploration of the countryside, collection of fossils, plants and specimens and systematic recording.

Clemes was a frequent public lecturer in chemistry and geology in Hobart. He travelled as far as Queensland as a minister of the Society of Friends. He was honorary secretary in 1897–1910, chairman in 1910–15 and president in 1915–22 of the Blind, Deaf and Dumb Institution; a member of the Royal Society of Tasmania from 1910; a foundation member of the Hobart Young Men's Christian Association and president of the Tasmanian Council of Churches.

Clemes resigned in June 1900 after misunderstandings with the committee of his school, and that year he established Leslie House School in Pirie Street, New Town—it moved to Boa Vista in Argyle Street in 1907. It also flourished as a 'family' school with an emphasis on character development. The kindergarten was based on Froebel's ideas and Madame Montessori's methods were later introduced. Clemes died on 25 October 1922 in New Town and was buried in the Society of Friends' section of Cornelian Bay cemetery. He was survived by his wife, two daughters and two sons, the elder of whom, William, had followed his father in 1915 as headmaster of Leslie House School, renamed Clemes College in 1922—in 1946 it was amalgamated with The Friends' School.

Clemes was regarded by many as an innovator fifty years ahead of his times. He was outspoken in his opposition to prizes and marks, having faith that students would pursue learning for its own sake. His announcement in 1887 that no homework would be set drew much public comment. To hundreds of his pupils he was affectionately known as 'Old Sammy'. One of these wrote: 'The traditional relation of master and pupil did not exist between him and us, for we always felt that in him we had a sincere and approachable friend ... With him, religion was not a creed to be believed, but a life to be lived. His constant advice to his pupils was that they should aim at growing up good, rather than great or clever'.

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# Samuel Clemes

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Liskeard  
Cornwall, England  
Death: Oct. 25, 1922  
New Town  
Tasmania, Australia

## Family links:

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[Margaret Hall Hall Clemes \(1848 - 1923\)](#)

Children:  
[Isabella Mary Clemes Shoobridge \(1873 - 1934\)\\*](#)

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# Margaret Hall *Hall* Clemes

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Birth: Jul., 1848  
Hexham  
Northumberland, England

Death: Apr. 4, 1923  
New Town  
Tasmania, Australia

## Family links:

Spouse:  
[Samuel Clemes \(1846 - 1922\)\\*](#)

Children:  
[Isabella Mary Clemes Shooobridge \(1873 - 1934\)\\*](#)

[\\*Calculated relationship](#)

Burial:  
[Cornelian Bay Cemetery And Crematorium](#)  
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